



MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

for Students with Disabilities

Sponsored by:
The Governor's Council on Disability
Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities

What is the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)?

- The YLF is a unique career leadership training program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. This program was first developed by the California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons in 1992.
- The Office of Disability Employment Policy set forth to replicate this initiative in all 50 states. The criteria set forth by California is required of all states that implement YLF. As of 2005, at least 29 states have implemented Youth Leadership Forums.
- Missouri held it's first Youth Leadership Forum in 2001.

- The Missouri Governor Council on Disability and the Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities are the major partners in the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF).
- MYLF is the only forum designed for students with disabilities in Missouri.
- The student delegates participate in a statewide competition that seeks students with disabilities who have exhibited leadership potential.
- Student delegates are equipped with additional training through their participation in the four-day forum so that they may become leaders by example when they return to their home communities.

Goals of MYLF

- Develop leadership skills to ensure that all youth with disabilities will obtain their full potential.
- Promote inclusion in all aspects of society: nation, state, and local levels.
- Participate in policymaking or practices that affect young people with disabilities.

MYLF Agenda

- Leadership Principles and Their Application.
- The Disability Experience and Resource Sharing.
- Assistive Technology and Resources.
- The Development and Achievement of Career Goals and Independent Living.
- Developing Advocacy Skills.

Principles of Leadership

Individuals who are leaders typically share the following characteristics:

- Ability to set and implement personal goals.
- Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses as well as a knowledge of their personal uniqueness.
- Ability to motivate others.
- Integrity and honesty.
- Trust
- Effective decision making ability

Principles of Leadership

Individuals who are leaders typically share the following characteristics:

- Enthusiasm.
- Critical thinking.
- Support for teamwork.
- Understanding of conflict resolution.
- Social responsibility.
- Support for continuous improvement and change.

Principles of Leadership

Individuals who are leaders typically share the following characteristics:

- Willingness to share power.
- Determination and perseverance.
- Demonstration of personal values through behavior.
- Respect for diversity and individual differences.
- Belief in a higher purpose -- to serve others.

Principles of Leadership are accomplished by student delegates participation in:

- Small and large group sessions focused on disability culture, building leadership skills, employment and developing a plan for their future.
- Training sessions led by speakers who have disabilities and are leaders in their communities.
- Mentor luncheon featuring individuals with disabilities who work in a diverse array of employment situations.
- Touring the State Capitol, learning about the legislative process and participation in role play exercises.
- Learning about assistive technology.

What is the Cost?

- There is NO COST FOR THE STUDENT DELEGATE TO ATTEND MYLF!
- This is made possible by donations made by public and private organizations, agencies and citizens.

You Can Help!!!

- Help us get the word out to juniors and seniors in high school who have disabilities. Applications are available at:
 - www.gcd.oa.mo.gov
- If you would like a presentation about MYLF, contact co-chairs:
 - Linda Baker (800) 877-8249, or
 - Vicky Davidson (800) 500-7878
- Make a tax deductible donation to help students attend the forum. Checks can be made payable to ILRC/MYLF and mailed to:

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